

WHY THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE?

Shanksville, PA, where Flight 93 crashed, is the final resting place for the passengers and crew. The crash site is now a cemetery and should be treated with the upmost respect and compassion. 92% of our families remains are were unidentifiable and remain at the site. The site, without proper care and maintenance, has the potential of becoming a circus atmosphere where trinkets and trash will be sold. The meaning of the site and the people who died there fighting is much deeper than that.

The passengers and crew of United Flight 93 have been referred to by the President of the United States, as well as other prominent leaders, as the first Americans to fight a battle on American soil since the Civil War. They were the first casualties on U.S. soil in the war against terrorism. As such, the site can be compared to battle sites such as Gettysburgh and Antietam, both National Parks.

The town of Shanksville is "small town America" and thus not equipped to take on the burden, both financial and logistical, of maintaining a site where Americans can go to remember the heroics of the 40 passengers and crew. The crash site should be a place to say a prayer, meditate or reflect on just what happened on Sept. 11, 2001; a day that will be remembered as one of America's darkest.

The only way the site can be maintained properly for future generations is to have the NPS take over and maintain the site. This site is part of U.S. History for current and future generations. The story of the crew and passengers of Flight 93 will be written in the U.S. History text books. To rely on Shanksville and or Somerset County and its future population to do so in a respectful and dignified manner is placing an undue burden on today's children and future generations.

If not the NPS, then who? Who can bear the responsibility of insuring that the site is a place where Americans can go and feel that the Flight 93 passengers were properly recognized for their selfless heroic act? Forty lives were lost saving numerous others. CBS News has reported on May 23, 2002 that the target of Flight 93 was the White House. What must be remembered, and never forgotten, is that beyond a mere plane crash, the people on that flight made sure that no others became victims of the terrorists. Our government should be thankful to them for their heroism and make sure that this site is under U.S. Government care and funding.

Remember, no one gave orders to the soldiers of Flight 93. They took it upon themselves to save others. They fought a battle at 35,000 feet in an aisle no wider than three feet. A proper Memorial to their memory is the very least than can be done to appropriately remember these brave and valiant people. The NPS should be the ones to do it. It is the right thing to do.

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(daughter of Hilda Marcin, deceased, Flight 93 – 9/11/01)